

'Atha': A Revolution

There are three main paths to experience the Almighty – 'Bhakti yoga', 'Gyan yoga' and 'Karma yoga'. Which path is suitable for a seeker is dependent on his temperament, on his nature. If in a seeker, emotions dominate, then he is most likely to fit for Bhakti yoga. If in a seeker wisdom dominates then he is most likely to be suitable for Gyan yoga and if a seeker is action oriented then he is fit for karma yoga. Whether it is emotion or wisdom or action that is the dominating force in a seeker, it is highly unlikely that he will endeavour on the path of spirituality until he experiences '*atha*'. '*Atha*' stands for bringing about a revolution, for changing the course of life. In other words, to steer the course of life which currently revolves around pleasures and materialistic things towards the Almighty or towards the ultimate Truth is what *Atha* stands for. Therefore in Vedanta it is said, '*Atha Brahma Jigyasa*'. Similarly even in Bhakti and yoga it is said, '*Atha Bhakti Jigyasa*' and '*Atha Yoganushasanam*'. The breaking of our belief systems, our conceptions (or misconceptions) is *Atha*. Unfortunately we consider our beliefs to be the truth the reality and therefore when they break we feel hurt. The reality though is that when one realizes or experiences what the truth is then the beliefs, conceptions automatically fade away. For example, for a seed to sprout and grow its outer core must break. As long as there is a sheath, cover, shell around the seed it doesn't sprout and until it sprouts it cannot grow into a tree. To travel the distance from a seed to a tree the outer covering has to break. Similarly as long as a seeker is chained by his belief-systems he cannot unearth the Truth. The barrier that exists for one to realize God, to become one with Him, is this belief-system. The ego, attachment in these belief systems is ignorance. But once '*Atha*' occurs, the person who till now was entangled by objects will start to develop nonchalance towards the same objects. The search for Truth begins. The focus of life changes its direction towards the Self. The light of Truth starts to end the darkness of ignorance. The seeker starts to experience peace.

Until *atha* happens, or in other words until the desire to realize the Truth intensifies, until then whether the person is married or a sanyasi he cannot find the Truth. To experience Truth it doesn't matter whether one is married or a recluse, what matters is whether there is a strong desire to experience it. This strong desire is what is called *Jigyasa*. The liberating Knowledge neither belongs to a saint nor a householder, it is the seeker's. One who is thirsty will find water and quench his thirst! Thus, a seeker who yearns for liberation will strive for it and will experience the ultimate truth. Hence, the life in which the seed of *jigyasa* has sprouted is blessed.

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